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REALITIES OF PARISH LIFE

John Coulson
BERTRAND RUSSELL AT NINETY

A Poem by Brother Antoninus • *Christopher Dawson at Harvard* • *John O'Hara's Hollywood* *Huxley's New Utopia* • *Picasso in New York*

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THE COMMONWEAL

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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

The Self-Excusing Animal

"THE QUESTION of Eichmann's ordinary appearance," wrote a young Jewish observer nearly a year ago, "obsesses everybody in the court." When asked himself whether he could discover anything about Eichmann which would distinguish him from other men, he could only reply: "Nothing at all. No matter what anyone says, it's impossible." Nor, looking at the last photographs of Adolph Eichmann can we discover anything—except perhaps that he looks intelligent. And that is hardly any comfort.

For Adolph Eichmann was, if anything, an intelligent bureaucrat, an organizer, a planner and an engineer. There was nothing about Eichmann's career to suggest that he was simply an ignorant, misguided man, misused and manipulated by more brilliant superiors, a victim of the system more than one responsible for it. Eichmann was, in short, that "rational animal" we offer as a definition of "man." Indeed, if rationality is thought of as the capacity to envision goals and to act consistently to attain them, Eichmann was eminently rational. How many of us, after all, would have the organizational talents to run an empire on the scale of Auschwitz, Treblinka, Bergen-Belsen, Dachau and Buchenwald? Or schedule the necessary trains and procure the required gas? Or kill so many people—including a million children—in so short a time?

But of course, one may reply, Eichmann's premises were all wrong: his consistency was that of a barbarian, his premises those of an animal not of a man. But does an animal, as he is about to die, say: "I had to obey the rules of war and my flag. I am ready." Well then, at least Eichmann was a Godless unbeliever and hence—"After a short while, gentlemen, we shall all meet again. So is the fate of all men. I have lived believing in God, and die believing in God." Then perhaps Eichmann, in contrast with an animal, did not have the capacity for joy. Wrong again, for was he not reported to have said: "I will jump into my grave laughing, for to know that I have six million people on my conscience will be a source of extraordinary satisfaction"?

EICHMANN, of course, did not jump into his grave laughing. There was, for one thing, no grave at all. Like those of millions of his victims, his body was cremated. And instead of laughter, Eichmann stated in a final appeal for mercy: "I declare, as I already declared in court, that I abhor the atrocities against the Jews, which must be viewed as the greatest of crimes." He was only, he said, an "instrument," adding that "no benefits whatever came to me." Thus, finally, a note of altruism and devotion to duty.

Like many others, we have asked ourselves again and again what the meaning of Eichmann and his life was; and the meaning, in the end, of the murder of six million Jews. The trial itself provided little insight—unless it brought home to us with horrible clarity that Eichmann's defense was based on all the values which are common coin in our day. Eichmann did not have, we must recognize, a queer or esoteric set of values, some fantastic, deranged view of the universe. He seems to have lived, like the rest of us, on clichés and popular pieties: that one must be loyal to one's superiors, that patriotism excuses many excesses, that only a few men are responsible for the crimes of many, that the individual can do very little.

Yet in the end it is perhaps as great a distortion to see Eichmann as Everyman as it is to see him as not a man at all. The ordinary person, we still believe, would at some point or other have revolted from carrying out his orders as faithfully as did Eichmann. Many, we know, did and many died rather than give allegiance to Hitler. We cannot help being shaken to discover that Eichmann had so many of the virtues we are prone to exalt; but we can also see that he distorted these values on such

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a fantastic scale that the fault was his as much as the values. Every value, however good, can be made to serve our own interests; never has this truism been so perfectly illustrated.

It is, perhaps, this last point which makes the drawing of a final moral so difficult. The most obvious thing to say is that men need a better set of values—values which would make it impossible for humanity to produce an Eichmann. But it seems only too apparent that the possession of a high moral code does not guarantee that it will be followed, or that men will not—in their native ingenuity—find some way to corrupt and turn these values to their own account. Eichmann himself was, apparently, capable of recognizing a moral issue; that did not help the Jews one bit. Nor, for that matter, were the Jews greatly helped by the fact that many during the war and before knew they were being exterminated and saw the evil of it—and didn't lift a finger to save them.

Eichmann has, however, taught us one thing: that the source of corruption lies in our readiness to relinquish responsibility for our actions. We cannot do without values, however much man may be prone to debase them. Nor can we expect much from exhorting men to do good and avoid evil: they already know that. But we can make it clear, day in and day out, that the choice between good and evil is our choice and one that cannot be made for us. We can at least teach men—by opening the book of Adolph Eichmann's career—that any evil they participate in is their evil; that neither duty nor loyalty nor ignorance nor some purported higher value can excuse us from choosing for ourselves.

Even more than being a symbol of the inhuman man, Eichmann is the symbol of man as the self-excusing animal. Man, as the only animal capable of doing wrong, is the only animal capable of telling himself that wrong is right and evil good. Man, as the only animal capable of reasoning, is the only animal capable of devising rationalizations for his conduct. If we have learned that much from Adolph Eichmann we will have come away with something —the kind of wisdom man learns only the hard way. And promptly forgets?

Black Monday

THE RECENT stock market decline—or slide or dip or maybe even crash—has called all the experts into print, and their testimony is, as usual, confusing. The stock market savants are clear enough on *what* happened in the May 28 drop of almost twenty-one billion dollars in stock values. But then so are we all. And on the crucial questions of why it happened and what is going to happen next, the experts are simply not very helpful.

In the face of this diffidence, the non-expert would be foolhardy indeed if he pretended to have all the answers, or even some of them. Still, there are a couple of observations that can be made fairly safely.

One obvious conclusion to be drawn from this worst market drop since 1929 is that surges of stock-buying or -selling on Wall Street have less direct bearing on the state of the nation's economy than used to be the case. A significant part of the May 28 panic can be explained, therefore, in psychological or perhaps stock-market terms rather than industrial or economic.

Related to this fact is the conviction of many big businessmen that President Kennedy's Administration has turned out to be anti-business. Republican and big business spokesmen have been muttering darkly ever since the steel dispute that America's businessmen were timid and fearful about their future in a hostile, Democratic environment. It may well be that their prediction of a business turndown was an inevitably self-fulfilling prophecy.

On the other, non-psychological hand, it is also true that stock prices have for a long time been extraordinarily high in relation to their earnings, and in this sense the recent stock revaluation could be said to have been overdue. This view is supported by the fact that a gradual stock decline has been underway for many months and by the continued pressure on the dollar because of our payments deficit and gold losses.

The most ironic thing about the entire stock market gyration, it seems to us, is the reaction to it of many conservative spokesmen. While the President has been minimizing the importance of the stock decline, speaking sternly about the dangers of inflation and the necessity of protecting the "integrity of the dollar" (where have we heard that phrase before?), businessmen have been urging Mr. Kennedy to bolster the economy by means of drastic, pump-priming measures, i.e., deficit spending. Moreover, much of the explanation for the stock dip, according to these fiscal conservatives, is the realization by the business community that the President is apparently really determined to do what they've been urging for years—that is, combat inflation and maintain the stability of the dollar.

For Mr. Kennedy, the humor in this reversal is probably slight, caught as he is in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" squeeze between domestic pressures that seem to call for inflationary tactics (unemployment, lagging economic growth) and international pressures that call for anti-inflationary tactics (the balance of payments deficit and gold

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loss). And President Eisenhower has apparently not yet even learned of this development. His unshakable explanation of the market collapse: "reckless spending" by the Democrats.

Khrushchev on Trade

IN ONE way it is curious that Nikita Khrushchev should have chosen the present moment to attack the European Economic Community so vehemently. His "friendship meeting" with President Keita and the delegation from Mali was hardly a big enough occasion for such a Russian broadside, even though the Soviet leader had his proposal of a new world-wide trade organization and his accusations of the E.E.C. broadcast and televised to the world. The denunciation comes precisely as Britain is tackling the thorniest elements in its projected agreement with the Common Market. If Khrushchev's charges have the effect of aggravating certain fears of European negotiators (and of the far-flung British Commonwealth), his opposition will only heighten a common determination to press on toward the political union he opposes.

Having reached agreement on minor matters, the British and the E.E.C. are now confronted with the Commonwealth problem. With agricultural products accounting for nearly half of Commonwealth exports, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are understandably most exercised lest a British-E.E.C. tariff wall be raised against them; India, Pakistan and Ceylon have similar fears for the future of their vital textile exports. And the E.E.C. representatives continue to insist that if Britain becomes a member, it will not be able to retain its preferential treatment for Commonwealth goods. To arrive at an acceptable formula graduated over a number of years will require an abundance of good will and ingenuity on both sides. Yet the low and decreasing exterior tariff rates that the Common Market envisages do favor the reaching of an agreement.

Khrushchev's attack also coincides with the delicate negotiations on the subject between Mr. Macmillan and General de Gaulle. Up to now the French have been in the van of those seeking to move from economic to political union, although de Gaulle has favored alliance or confederation rather than outright political union. At present French pressure to take up this possibility has slackened. The General prefers to postpone discussion of such steps until the British question is settled. But the Khrushchev broadcast could be particularly helpful in reviving France-British sentiment for stronger bonds of union.

Just as the Soviet Union opposes the strengthening and unifying of Western Europe, so the United States warmly favors it. In order to bring it about we are prepared to make substantial economic sacrifices and contemplate the emergence of a strong united Western Europe able to act quite independently of our own wishes. The terms of this union are for others to determine. But it is important for us to exert what tactful influence we can on the matter of the E.E.C.'s relationship to the underdeveloped lands. The fears of the Commonwealth nations, and the Khrushchev charges, are not wholly without foundation. Unless sound economic development for the peoples of the Afro-Asian world is an integral part of the program of the Atlantic nations, the best-drawn plans for European union can have only limited effect.

Darkly Familiar

REPORTS FROM Laos continue to be discouraging, and news from that battle-torn land continues to dominate the dispatches from Southeast Asia. Perhaps even more important than the Laotian situation, however, at least in long-range terms, are developments in South Vietnam, and here too it can only be said that the reports are discouraging.

Militarily, things are no worse for President Ngo Dinh Diem's anti-Communist regime in its resistance to guerrilla raids and infiltration, and perhaps they are even a little better. But in other respects the news from Saigon falls into a pattern which is anything but reassuring. The need for social reform and for action to alleviate the hunger and misery of thousands of peasants and tribesmen displaced by guerrilla attacks grows in urgency day by day. But President Diem's government is little moved by American representations to this effect and in fact actively resents U.S. "meddling." The prospect, therefore, is for further distress among the peasantry and for further loss of support by a regime which even now inspires no great loyalty among its people.

The official U.S. position seems to be that we have no choice except to support President Diem, who is at least a sincere anti-Communist and a determined leader, strictly on his terms, with or without reforms. Maybe so, but we can't help remembering that previous Administrations gave just these arguments for supporting other leaders who were strong and dedicated anti-Communists in countries which are today an embarrassment and danger. Must it be true that the only thing we learn from history is that men learn nothing from history?

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Be the First on Your Block

IF HAMMACHER SCHLEMMER say they've got water shoes, there's no reason to doubt them. What amazes us, though, is the quiet matter-of-factness of their ad: "Lets you walk on water . . . rigid polyurethane foam, fiberglas, $39.95." And, of course, a tastefully restrained drawing of a man nonchalantly walking on the waves. But soft-sell or not, the idea of water shoes has us pretty much hooked. Not that we'd want to use the things, especially. We'd just like to *have* them, and when people asked us what we were going to do over the week end we could say, "Oh, I don't know. Maybe I'll just go out to the lake and walk around on the water."

Christopher Dawson at Harvard

LATE IN the Fall of 1958, Douglas Horton, then Dean of the Harvard Divinity School, asked me to serve as an assistant to Christopher Dawson, the first holder of the Chauncey Stillman chair of Roman Catholic Studies at Harvard. The prospect was both appalling and attractive. From earlier conversations with Mr. Dawson it had become painfully clear that, measuring by his standards, I was a grossly uninformed Catholic, ignorant of Church history and devoid of either information or insight on the relationship of religion and culture. It had seemed impossible to initiate any conversation in which I was not carried—on the bark of comparative religion, anthropology, philosophy, theology, social history, obscure fourth editions of unknown nineteenth century German monographs, and primitive language systems—instantly and hopelessly beyond my depth.

Fortunately, I soon discovered that Mr. Dawson took it for granted that I knew as much as he did; he assumed that not only I, but his students and friends as well, knew all that he knew. For me, this was a help—as long as I said very little and nodded knowingly at the right moment. For his students, on the other hand, Mr. Dawson was frightening. Unlike most Englishmen of Oxford education, Mr. Dawson came to America with a number of illusions about American students: that they knew, as a matter of course, French, German and Latin, world history, the classics; that they were prepared to read three or four books a week for one course; and that their term papers would be models of scholarly research.

It was my painful duty to insinuate that, as a matter of fact, nothing at all could be taken for granted about American students. And when I had a chance, I had to let the students, their faces blanched, know that if they read only eight hundred of the assigned five thousand pages for the week they could probably get by. Eventually these problems worked themselves out: the students read two hundred pages, I read two hundred and one, and Professor Dawson of course read all five thousand.

For all of us, Mr. Dawson's course on "Catholicism and the Development of Western Culture" was a thorough education. Never again would we be able to think that religion was just a matter of theology or a set of abstract beliefs. For Christopher Dawson made us see—as few people can do—how Christianity has shaped and vivified that Western culture we tend to think was born yesterday. He enabled us to see with striking clarity that every great and genuine culture was the product of man's conception of the divine and that the most trivial aspects of his social and political life bore the stamp of his relationship to God. If, to many of us, he seemed too hard on our own age, we came at least to recognize that the agnosticism, scientism and aimlessness of our day sets us dangerously apart from the viable and humanly productive cultures of the past. No one who has listened to Mr. Dawson is likely to be seduced by C. P. Snow's comfortable assertion that the scientists have the "future in their bones."

Now, after four years at Harvard, Christopher Dawson is returning to England. For those of us who were privileged to be with him over a long period of time, the impact of his learning and personality was considerable. Certainly he brought to the Harvard Divinity School, and the students who took his courses, a sense of the grandly cosmic, historical scope of Catholicism and Christianity. As the first occupant of the chair of Roman Catholic Studies at Harvard, Mr. Dawson, in a quiet and unobtrusive fashion, did much to stifle the doubts of those who questioned the very idea of such a chair in a Protestant divinity school.

Some Catholics, no doubt, would have preferred an aggressive, flamboyant approach. But Mr. Dawson's style and presence is that of a direct descendant of the Oxford Movement: calm, measured and a brother still of those who, in conversion to Catholicism, he left behind him. And as readers of his superb book *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement* will recall, it was the Oxford Movement which brought about the first genuine bond between Catholics and Protestants in the Anglo-Saxon world. After Newman, Manning and W. G. Ward, Oxford was never quite the same; perhaps in a somewhat similar sense, after Christopher Dawson, Harvard will never be quite the same. DANIEL CALLAHAN

(Mr. Callahan, an Associate Editor of The Commonweal, was Mr. Dawson's assistant for three years.)

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The Administration's Program for Modernization

Booster Shots for Transportation?

EDWARD T. CHASE

PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S message to Congress on transportation, his last message of the year, is in significant respects his most important. (Because of its lateness and the fact that proposed implementing legislation was not submitted till May 1, it may also be the least acted upon.) The fact that it is the first such Presidential message on transportation in the nation's history is notable in itself. Unimaginable in an earlier stage of our history, the message reflects the last quarter-century's technological revolution because it testifies to the critical interdependence of every activity upon every other activity in our very highly developed industrial order.

The answer to the first question that comes to mind, "why such a message at this time," is really implicit in this background condition of technological complexity and of interdependence. What actually triggered the message was trouble. For some time now depression has been afflicting America's public transportation system. This is the case to a spectacular degree among railroads (a quarter of them lost money in 1961; all the Northeastern lines were in the red; the industry net was only a 1.9 per cent return on a $28 billion plant investment), is almost as bad in the commercial airline industry (which had a net loss of $31 million) and in urban mass transit, and modestly applies to trucking, to intercity buses and to inland waterways.

Since transportation is the nation's biggest single economic activity and accounts for a fifth of our gross national product, this is a worrisome development. Furthermore, metropolitan areas, increasingly *the* U.S. environment as the urban boom accelerates, are seen to be suffering in the quality of their life and the efficiency of their services. And deficient transportation, with its attendant congestion and corrupting land use, is manifestly a prime cause for this. On all these grounds, the Kennedy Administration has had to be seriously and immediately concerned.

There is more behind this official worry than transport's plight. Prosperous transportation systems and even efficient cities are not ultimate ends in themselves. But "ultimate" ends depend on them. For the real point about modern transportation is that it pervades everything we do. The attainment of fundamental national goals like economic growth, full employment and the wise use of resources depends on good transportation. To quote the President, "This nation has long enjoyed one of the most highly developed and diversified transportation systems in the world, and this system has helped us to achieve a highly efficient utilization of our manpower and resources. Transportation is thus an industry which serves, and is affected with, the national interest."

The message goes on to say: "But pressing problems are burdening our national transportation system, jeopardizing the progress and security on which we depend. A chaotic patchwork of inconsistent and often obsolete legislation and regulation has evolved from a history of specific actions addressed to specific problems of specific industries at specific times. This patchwork does not fully reflect either the dramatic changes in technology of the past half-century or the parallel changes in the structure of competition."

That is a significant passage. What it is expressing is that the development of mass-produced private cars and trucks and mass-produced highways, the latter subsidized by tax monies, have superseded the railroads, which have to maintain their own, private rights of way; that the development of commercial air service has exacerbated this trend (the airplane is now the main passenger intercity common carrier); that the suburban-urban population boom resulting in immense sprawling metropolitan areas, impossible to serve by a rail system, has necessitated an elaborate road system and flexible automotive transport; that modern production technology puts a premium on long horizontal structures that must be built on less congested land on the peripheries of old central cities (likewise the suburban homes of the employees) and can only be serviced by automotive transport; that railways are still further weakened by the five-day week (loss of that sixth day was a surprisingly big blow) and by the fact that about sixty per

EDWARD T. CHASE writes frequently on urban planning and national resources.

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cent of passenger service is commutation, that is, a discount service; and that today's terminal and labor costs for passenger rail service are ruinously expensive; that the development of pipelines and of fast, efficient Diesel-driven barge traffic on inland waterways and now the beginnings of a substantial volume of air freight all have further burdened the rails.

THESE ARE some of the "dramatic changes in technology of the last half century" that the United State's patchwork, anachronistic transportation regulations have not been modified to accommodate or to take serious account of.

But while the decline of the railroads is the biggest manifestation of the evil consequences of outmoded (and ofttimes outlandish) public policies, the Presidential message reviews other ills stemming from such policy. The regulatory agencies in transportation don't only regulate—they also are enjoined by law to promote the growth of their different modes. And one effect of this ambiguous function—most evident in subsidy, both direct and indirect, and also evident in the solicitude of an agency, the Civil Aeronautics Board for example, to maintain the life of a sick airline—is the development of vast overcapacity in transport.

For example, the airlines lost $31 million last year because they used only 56.2 per cent of their available seats (a situation largely brought about again by technological change, namely the bigger, faster new jet planes). The railroads run half-empty trains and all but a few freight lines are in the red; buses witnessed a drop in their load-factor and meantime the streets of great cities are jammed with private cars averaging a passenger load of 1.8 persons per trip. The overcapacity, largely the result of obsolete public policy, is usually rationalized on the grounds it assures competition, when really all it has been assuring is wasteful redundancy of resources (thirty per cent of our 220,000 miles of railway track, for instance, serve no clearly defensible purpose).

But what makes the overcapacity especially difficult to live with nowadays is the concomitant rise of a new phenomenon in transport—the private carrier, not just the automobile but more significantly the private trucking fleet and to a lesser extent barge fleets. Not only are these unregulated private carriers of big and even moderate-sized firms now carrying twenty-five per cent of all freight; they illegitimately carry an unknown but substantial amount by functioning like common "for hire" carriers on their return trips after they have deposited their legitimate loads, unfettered by rate or other regulations.

Already in a vicious spiral of declining revenues, reduced service and maintenance, and ever steeper financing costs, the common carriers threaten to founder under this unfair competition. And this is a dangerous thing, because up to fifty per cent of America's business enterprises depend upon cheap, fast, scheduled efficient common carriage and can't afford their own private carriage.

Meantime, on top of all this, American transportation has been the scene of some of the more absurd antics of modern-day political economy. Over 25,000 communities have lost all public transport service with the outer world, with their inter-city connections now dependent on private cars. Railroads have petitioned for and won the right to abandon services and the same community is then served with an inefficient, costly local air service which federal assistance is required to keep afloat to the tune of a $10-per-passenger subsidy. Our very largest cities, meanwhile, are harassed with automotive congestion, noise and dirt, in no small measure owing to the fact that federal subsidy pays for ninety per cent of highways that qualify as part of the interstate system while no comparable nourishment is extended to mass transit that might balance the situation. At the same time, community land-use planning is nullified by failure to recognize that *regional* transportation developments, notably freeways and airports, unless accommodated in local planning considerations, will knock local plans into smithereens.

HOW DOES the President propose to correct all this? To begin with, he doesn't propose to correct all of it. That's too big an order. But he does outline major reforms impressive in their perceptiveness of the problem and bold in their scope. Here's the first surprise, in the light of the furor over the Administration's intercession in the steel-price situation and the mounting evidence of Administration determination to stress the public interest in major labor-management conflicts: the President wants to reduce government interference in transportation. He states, "It [a more coordinated federal policy and a less segmented approach] means greater reliance on the forces of competition and less reliance on the restraints of regulation." The legislation proposed May 1, "Transportation Act Of 1962," drafted to implement the message, states that the bill is designed "to reduce drastically and equalize fairly the regulation

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of freight rates in this country." Much the same could be said for passenger transport. The profit motive, in this instance at least, is to be unharnessed, if the President has his way.

The most important specific proposal is to do away with government regulation of the minimal rates railroads are allowed to offer in shipping bulk commodities (coal, ores, grain, oil, etc.) and agricultural and fishery products. This would be a tremendous reform, a great shot in the arm for the railroads. As of now, only the water carriers are free of regulated rates on shipping bulk commodities, while the truckers have enjoyed a similar freedom from regulation on agricultural and fishery products. By extending this "exemption" from regulation to the railroads, it will enable them to offer low, indeed minimal, rates and win back business they feel they would never have lost to the barge lines and motor carriers had they been allowed to realize to the full the inherent efficiency of their equipment in a free market. The magnitude of this category of the railroads' business is reflected in the fact that bulk commodities and agricultural and fish products already now account for about forty to fifty per cent of total rail revenues and up to seventy per cent of the total railroad freight tonnage.

Other specifics are repeal of the prohibition against railroads hauling freight they themselves own, like coal, and elimination of any further financial subsidy to the eleven major or "trunk" airlines and a phased reduction of subsidy to the thirteen small "feeder" or "local service" airlines and the three helicopter lines. Also, the elimination of regulation on minimum fares for intercity air, rail and bus passenger transportation, again with the aim of restoring the tonic of free competition. Intended results: lower fares, higher volume, greater revenues.

The President urges too, a directive to regulatory agencies and certain Departments to push experiments in new kinds of rates and transport services, and a directive to promote more "through-service" transport arrangements and more participation by the carriers in establishing joint rates. This would give greater coherence and a sensible continuity to transportation. He calls for the creation of an advisory group drawn from the Council of Economic Advisers and the Justice, Commerce and Labor Departments, to devise basic policy on airline and railroad mergers. Since over-capacity and redundancy is a fundamental cause of depression in transport today and since mergers offer one of the best means to achieve consolidation, chances are that mergers will be increasingly favored in the coming next few years.

Another recommendation is repeal of the ten per cent tax on passenger tickets but the imposition of certain other "user charge" taxes to help rationalize the tax burden by seeing to it those who use a service are its principal supporters. Hence there would be a fuel tax on inland water carriers, also on jet aircraft fuel. Also, new emphasis on research into new transport technology, including hydrofoil ships, "air cushion" vehicles (like Ford's "Levacar"), vertical-take-off-and-landing aircraft, etc., all of which can offer exciting possibilities for ameliorating certain transportation headaches, and federal financial assistance for urban mass transit facilities, next to the rate regulation exemptions on railroads perhaps the most important of the President's specific proposals and the one most likely to get legislative action this year.

This last is a popular proposal. It amounts to a $500 million program over three years in grants to be matched by local public agencies. It is for such assistance as improving rolling transit stock and acquiring rights of way. As recent testimony in the Senate emphasized, this program's effect would be to substitute mass transit facilities for new automotive facilities. Testimony developed that without mass transit soon ninety highway lanes would be needed to handle traffic moving into San Francisco from the south, one hundred twenty lanes would be needed to serve the Atlanta of 1970, situations increasingly typical of America's largest cities.

THESE ARE the highlights of the President's message. But the whole is bigger than the parts. Even the anti-Administration business press conceded the message's merit in giving a logical sense of direction to over-all government policy. In fact, the message constitutes a very major effort on the part of the Kennedy Administration to grapple with two basic national concerns. One concern is to stimulate economic growth. The other is to save our environment, essentially our urban-suburban environment, from incoherence, immobility and land corruption.

A superior national transportation system helps economic growth by lowering a prime cost—transportation and distribution of goods and services. Economic growth in turn reduces the unemployment problem. And lower production costs also help our competitive position and our balance of payments problem, vital Administration concerns. Similarly, a superior transportation system means providing balanced transport (i.e., the proper functioning of *all* modes of transportation) in our metropolitan areas, with beneficial effects on not only movement of goods and people but also on land use.

The country keeps hearing urgent pleas to "speed economic growth" and to "save our cities." Well, the way governments can do this, and the only way, it seems to me, is through just such fundamental reforms as the transportation message proposes. There are no magic shortcuts. And many toes will be stepped on in the process.

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Laymen and the Council

Realities of Parish Life

JOSEPH E. CUNNEEN

In recent months laymen have repeatedly been invited to voice their views and aspirations on the Ecumenical Council. Thus Francis Cardinal Koenig of Vienna, a member of the Central Preparatory Commission for the Council, said: "Do not wait for the Bishop or for a report from Rome, if you have something to say about the Council. . . . Urge, when you feel urging is necessary."

In keeping with these invitations, The Commonweal is publishing a special series devoted to the layman's hopes and desires in connection with the Council. Joseph E. Cunneen, author of this third article in the series, is managing editor of "Cross Currents." —THE EDITORS

LET ME STRIKE a sour note at the outset, and suggest that the invitation for laymen to speak out on the coming Council first be considered in the dominant context of Catholic indifference and skepticism. It is true, of course, that in the last few years alumnae groups who wanted to be *au courant* have scheduled at least one speaker who could flavor his talk with words like "ecumenical" and "dialogue," but any idea that the Council requires an involvement and commitment of the entire Church could hardly make much headway against our perennial absorption in building drives and rhetorical anti-Communism. To all outward appearances, the parish clergy and church-going laity possess a united response: the Council is a good idea, but no concern of ours.

And as for consulting laymen, what possibly can Cardinal Koenig, who voiced the explicit invitation, mean? Doubtless there are available amiable eccentrics who specialize in Byzantine liturgies or the history of canon law, but what response outside of downright hilarity would greet any wide-eyed "Catholic Action-ist" who told the local Holy Name Society—to say nothing of that more representative group, the men who do not attend the meetings—that their views on the coming Council were being solicited? "I can't get through to my pastor," one might say, "on why I object to using envelopes in the collection, or why I want to keep my family together, and not ship the kids off to a separate children's Mass; how can I have anything to say to theologians and cardinals?"

Only, of course, no one says this to the bishop; and, unless conditions are very different in Austria, no one says this to Cardinal Koenig, either. A laudable reverence for his role as heir of the Apostles shields him from the vulgarity in which the layman might express his instinctive, somewhat cynical conviction that the business of the Church is an affair for specialists. Occasionally, a dissident voice may reach his ears, but it is apt to sound like what it probably is: a gripe, a clash of personalities, some uninformed and irresponsible petulance. Yet even such expressions have their importance, and partly because of their inadequacy. If we had a strong and continuing tradition of lay responsibility, the voices would be more positive, more confident—and more deeply Christian.

Those who rightly complain of lay immaturity today should be forced to reflect on those patterns in Catholic life which help to prolong indefinitely a state of adolescence. Catholic schools that pride themselves on their discipline rarely provide the most exemplary models of student self-government. Similarly, laymen are often given the impression by their priest friends that any display of initiative will only make their superiors suspicious. One ultimately begins to believe that the atmosphere of ecclesiastical restraint, coupled with a prudence not exclusively spiritual in character, is hardly an ideal one to help the bishop become truly informed about the problems in his diocese.

IT WOULD appear, then, that the opening of lines of regular communication within the Church should be an underlying concern throughout the work of the Council. At the same time, it is only just to recognize that gestures of encouragement such as that of Cardinal Koenig are increasingly common on all levels, from the Vatican to the local parish.

The two World Congresses of the Lay Apostolate held at Rome (another is planned for 1963), the first African meeting of the Lay Apostolate at Uganda (1953) and the first Asian meeting at Manila (1955) are important events in a twentieth-century history of the Church. Such international movements as the Y.C.W., Pax Romana, Pax Christi, etc.—some of which seem surprisingly feeble or non-existent in the United States— are playing an indispensable role in world opinion.

When a document on "Temporal Commitment" was recently published by the French Episcopal Commission on Labor, it was the fruit of a collaboration between those bishops who were members of the committee and

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the national leaders of the Labor section of Catholic Action. As the preface states, these lay leaders contributed "their experience of the workers' world, their direct observation, which has made it possible for them to see how the worker looks at this commitment." A similar direction is suggested in the proposal of Father Lombardi for the creation of various councils, some composed of laymen, others of both priests and laymen, which would be capped by a lay "Senate of humanity."

Nevertheless, despite the responsible and genuine nature of such appeals, in the day-to-day life of the local church one can easily get the impression that "the age of the layman" is merely a new slogan for the inevitable Catholic organizations, summoned into being to suggest the outlines of vast popular support. Even at the World Lay Congress in Rome, John Todd's report on the first meeting—written for *Downside Review*, Spring 1952—suggests that genuine communication with authority was short-circuited, and that lay recommendations and resolutions were drastically edited by zealous monsignori. Does the nature of the Church really call for a clerical Sherman Adams, shielding bishops or the Pope from disturbing facts, especially if they are not couched in the terms of seminary rhetoric?

It would be a mockery of any notion of lay responsibility to summon a group into existence that would either never act, or whose judgments—in their own area of competence—were always identical with those of the hierarchy. In a given case, a Catholic labor group might decide to support a strike led by leftist leaders, or involving employees at Catholic institutions. They must not represent the bishop's position unfairly, and should keep in mind that their own is not infallible; nevertheless, I cannot see why they should not abide by their judgment. Another Catholic group, specialists on international affairs, may conclude that America should abandon its policy of trying to exclude Communist China from membership in the United Nations. But will they issue this statement if they know episcopal support will be immediately withdrawn, and their organization accused of indifference to the plight of the "Church of silence"? If they refrain, will their Christianity be more adult? Does the avoidance of embarrassment constitute a victory for the Church?

WHAT IS needed, then, it would seem, is not more "study days" on the role of the layman, but a change in attitude which for some may appear to be fundamental. There is no reason, however, to believe that attitudes cannot be changed in the Church if there is a will to dramatize the new approach: consider the revolution accomplished in the half-century since Pius X brought Communion to young children, and began to make us all see the necessity for more frequent reception of the Eucharist. Proposals already made in regard to the Council, advocating greater decentralization and further encouraging lay participation in the liturgy, suggest exciting possibilities.

Would smaller parishes, whose unpretentious structures would use the most economical materials possible, make it easier for all of us to see the altar as central? Studies of modern urbanism by sociologists of religion tend to suggest ecclesiastical units small enough for priests and people to know each other more easily, and in which spontaneous and meaningful ways of using lay assistants might develop naturally. The parish must keep in focus its central activity of celebrating the Christian mysteries, and through this means forming the minds and hearts of Christian adults; Christian parents, especially in these times of revolution, must be so trained that they can assume the major burden for the religious education of their children. This will free the parish to rediscover the essentially missionary dimension of Christianity, and to be present, without righteousness or proselytizing zeal, among the needs and concerns of the total community.

There need be no fear that the layman, in a burst of willful impatience, is straining at the teaching authority of the Church. Any Catholic who honestly grapples with his temporal vocation in the world comes to see the centrality of the bishop's role, and prays only to encounter him more frequently as teacher than as superadministrator. Few are the Sunday sermons which center on doctrine; fewer still are those which help us see in what way doctrines change anything in our lives. In this connection it might be helpful to take seriously Canon Jacques Leclercq's notion of moral heresy, especially since those teachings which are related to the Christian concept of fraternity are of central concern to everyday life.

We all make too little effort today to see the meaning of Christian poverty; is it an anachronism in our affluent societies of the West? It is hard for us to realize that justice *demands* that we seriously attack the problem of the shocking disparity of living standards between ourselves and the newer nations. Similarly, the same Catholic who is eager to make a personal sacrifice in his contribution to the parochial school in a growing suburban area is rarely helped to realize that his effort to build up Christ's body in his neighborhood is a fraud if it cooperates, even by passive collusion, with a pattern of systematic segregation in the new housing projects which are developing.

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No critique could be more telling than Canon Leclercq's summary: "The Catholic, as he is generally conceived, is characterized by his religious practices: he goes to Mass, he goes without meat on Friday; he is not characterized by charity. But this is practice; let us put the question from the doctrinal point of view: the Catholic then is one who *believes* that he must go to Mass and that he must do without meat on Friday, who recognizes that he is at fault if he does not do this; he is not one who *believes* that he must love his neighbor *as* Christ loved us and who acknowledges himself to be at fault if he does not love him *in that manner.*"

An informed Catholic can see the importance of such a Council proposal as re-emphasis of the office of bishop, especially since the notion of papal infallibility is usually seen in hopelessly unbalanced perspective. Nevertheless, the layman is apt to fear that the appreciation of such fundamentals will be obscured if the image of the Church projected is one with apparently no decisive and healing word to offer a desperately troubled world on such questions as modern warfare, the limits of nationalism, world hunger and capital punishment.

THE COUNCIL'S concern for our Orthodox brothers is a reason for hope, since among the positive results of the meetings is apt to be warmer and more frequent personal contacts, as well as increased mature study of Orthodoxy, perhaps even as part of regular seminary training. Reputable Catholic theologians have often told us that we will be better able to see that which is purely local, transient or unbalanced in our western Christendom as we gain greater familiarity with the Christian traditions of the East, with its experimental emphasis, its sense of transcendence allied to "negative theology," centered in the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

Unless this new knowledge is merely to be fitted into the rational, positive and technical character of Latin theology, however, must there not be a constant care, whether in the seminary, the pulpit, or the Catholic school, to stress the openness, the continuous operation of every Christian's attempt to appropriate the meaning of Revelation in his lived experience? Will this not lead logically to another of Cardinal Koenig's suggested topics, reforms in canon law pertaining to the reading of "prohibited books"? When there is less emphasis on prohibition, and more on the limited character of infallibility, the merely probable nature of many propositions now often presented as part of Catholic tradition will become clearer, as well as the inevitably speculative character of the bulk of the theological enterprise.

The *magisterium* has always one sure, but rarely employed, way to remind laymen of their vanity and ignorance: ask them to be saints. If we are hard on our pastors, it may finally be because they ask us only to be *regular in our religious practices.* What is crucial for us at the Council is not the precise wording of a decree but a significant reminder that through the Church we are being invited by Christ to share His life.

What is needed at the Council, then, is not better public relations, spectacular demonstrations or an ingenious use of popular jargon. What we must seek is a deeper understanding that the spirit in which the entire Church is called into Council is not for a certain number of days over in Rome, but something to be continued in human contacts and open communication every day in every parish.

God Germed in Raw Granite

God germed in raw granite, source-glimpsed in stone?
Or imaged out in the black-flamed
Onyx-open line? Smouldered in the tortured
Free-flow of lava? The igneous
Instant of conception? As maiden-form
Swells in the heaviness of wold, sleeps
Rumped and wanton-bulged in the boulder's
Bulk, is shaped in tree-forms everywhere
As any may see: dropped logs, say, or those crotched
Trunks, pronged like a reckless nymph
Head-plunged into the earth—so Godhood
Wakes under water, shape-lurked, or grave and somber,
Where sea falls, mocks through flung foam. . . .

Ghost!
Can this be? Breather of elemental truths
She stirs and coaxes! Out of my heart's howk,
Out of my soul's wild wrath
I make oath! In my emptiness
These arms gall for her, bride's mouth,
Spent-breathed in laughter, or that night's
First unblushing revealment, the flexed
Probity of the flesh, the hymen-hilted troth,
We closed, we clung on it, the stroked
And clangorous rapture!
I am dazed.
Is this she? Woman within!
Can this be? Do we, His images, float
Time-spun on the vaster drag
His timelessness evokes?
In the blind heart's core, when we,
Well-wedded merge, by Him
Twained into one and solved there,
Are these three? Are three
So oned, in the full-forthing
(Heart's reft, the spirit's great
Unreckonable grope, and God's
Devouring splendor in the stroke) are we—
This all, this utterness, this terrible
Total truth—indubitably He?

BROTHER ANTONINUS

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Heir to a Radical Tradition

Bertrand Russell at Ninety

JOHN COULSON

"MY GRANDFATHER," wrote Bertrand Russell, "whom I remember vividly, was born on the eighteenth of August, 1792, a fortnight after the poet Shelley, whose life ended in 1822. At the moment of my grandfather's birth the French Revolution was just getting under way." It was this grandfather whom Russell refers to as an aristocratic reformer—"a type now quite extinct"; but to look at the television screen and see some unfortunate interviewer transfixed by the unblinking stare of this aged eagle is to become certain that the type lives on—in the grandson. For four centuries Russell's family has been important in the public life of England, and in his person it still is. What are the qualities, besides sheer intelligence, which account for this continuing hold on British opinion?

At ninety, George Bernard Shaw was merely a grand old man, safe and senile on the shelf of public adulation. But Russell can still galvanize a police court, write books that are read for what they say, irrespective of the age of the person saying it, and be refused the use of the London Festival Hall for his ninetieth birthday party—in case the celebrations might lead to a breach of the peace. Yet in an age which prizes the false bonhomie of the television personality, Russell's crisp and emphatic answers have a Victorian manliness which is quite alien to the medium on which they appear.

In this respect, he reminds one more of a latter-day J. S. Mill than of any contemporary type. Nor is this a merely fanciful comparison. Russell has said that he is in complete agreement with Mill's values, especially in the emphasis placed upon the liberty of the individual; and one has only to recall the now celebrated broadcast debate between Russell and the Jesuit Fr. Copleston to see that what Russell has said of Mill can be said of himself: his intellectual integrity is impeccable. Until he went to Cambridge, Russell, like Mill, was "solitary, shy and priggish." But Mill was never a university man, whereas Cambridge fitted Russell like a glove; and he became a Fellow of Trinity in 1895.

If Mill can be described as having a joyless knowledge of the sources of joy, this cannot be said of Russell, whose sheer verbal exuberance has helped to make him the best-seller he so justly is. He admitted to Alfred North Whitehead, with whom he collaborated on *Principia Mathematica* from 1910-13, that he loved words; they seemed, said Whitehead, to satisfy his craving for expression. Yet beneath the wit is an edge of deep intellectual penetration. Of the Cambridge of his youth, he says, "incompetence, oddity and even insanity were tolerated, but so was real merit"—a description of the quintessence of successful academic liberty; and when, in his *History of Western Philosophy*, he says, "Kant was disaster," he means it.

IT TAKES more than flippancy, however, to endear a philosopher to the British; and Russell likes to tell the story of what happened when, during a pacifist meeting in the First World War, he was attacked by a couple of drunken viragos. The police who were standing by would not go to help him. "But he is an eminent philosopher," remonstrated a friend—the police merely shrugged their shoulders. "He is famous all over the world as a man of learning"—still nothing happened. "But he is the brother of an earl." At this, says Russell, the police rushed to his assistance. He succeeded his brother as third earl in 1931.

Russell was not so much a pacifist in the first World War as a political objector, which he still is. He thought then that a negotiated peace was the right policy, much as now he favors unilateral disarmament. "Love of England," he says, "is very nearly the strongest emotion I possess"; and his is the very essence of the English temperament: its love of words, precision, fact and its suspicion of system building, pretense and verbosity. Flippant about what pompous people take seriously, and passionately in earnest about what, for example, many Catholics of the Latin tradition tend to pass over by invoking *Rerum Novarum*—social justice—Russell is splendidly at one with Mill, his ancestors, and the whole English radical tradition.

In company with the founding fathers of the American constitution, the English radicals held certain truths to be self evident: that man was essentially rational and could be fulfilled only in a society which, by conceding individual liberty, allowed him to live in conformity with his nature. Following Mill and Bentham, they could accept no received opinion, no existing institution as either true or just until it had been proved so; and since the only true authority is that imposed by our-

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selves, a regime is acceptable only if its authority runs "genuinely and spontaneously" through the great majority of its people, and if it concedes reasonable autonomy to minorities. Despotism is, of all political forms, the most detestable; and since war is the chief promoter of despotism, it is the greatest obstacle to responsible and just government.

The chief characteristic of this radical attitude to authority is its union of liberal education and moral earnestness, since authority must be understood before it can be accepted, and the proper education of the mind is at once moral and intellectual. This was the discipline that brought the British Labor Party to power. What enabled it to produce men of the stature of Ernest Bevin and Herbert Morrison was that the authority of its policies was derived from men working and arguing in community of purpose, not in the Oxford Colleges, but up and down the country in small groups meeting in draughty halls and welded into that university of the common man—the Workers' Educational Association—which had for its first tutors R. H. Tawney and a future archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple. It is not surprising therefore to find that Russell himself ran a progressive school in Sussex from 1927-32, and that he has spent so much of his time in teaching throughout the world: the battle is lost or won in the schools, where, as he has said, freedom is the natural training for democracy, and autocracy the natural prelude to autocracy in the state.

IT IS against this background that we need to see his publication some five years ago of *Why I Am Not a Christian,* a book which the London *Times* reviewer thought ought to have been entitled *Why I Am Not a Low Church Anglican of a type almost wholly extinct.* And there is certainly a streak of theological naiveté in Russell: he seems rather easily put off by the failure of an early attempt to verify the existence of angels who did not, apparently, when he was a child, come when he called for them; and he thinks, following Mill, that the question "Who made God?" shows the simple fallacy in the argument from the First Cause. But his case does not really rest on grounds to which he is temperamentally antipathetic. His objections to religion are moral and political; and his collisions with the Church have been characteristically head-on: he does not stoop to insinuate.

Religious belief far from being necessary to morality produces fanaticism—"convictions which cannot be shaken by contrary evidence"—and this is the surest way to the sacrifice of all intellectual integrity, and therefore to all toleration and justice. The most dangerous of all Christian bodies is the Catholic Church, precisely because of the rigidity of its beliefs, any moderation in the fanaticism of which has been effected not by the Church but by its enemies. Thus not only is it the similarity between Christianity and Communism that makes them incompatible with each other, but religion produces the very attitudes which make war inevitable.

It is significant that Russell quotes with approval Mill's story of how his father rejected religion, not on intellectual but moral grounds; and it is clearly Russell's conviction that the practice of morality is harmed by its being related to religious belief. He told the Jesuit Fr. Copleston that good and bad are as self-evident to his feelings as blue and yellow are to his eyes; and he has said that to ground morals on religion is to confuse the philosophy of value with the philosophy of nature.

At the age of eighty-seven, Russell published what has been accepted as a classic of its kind: *My Philosophical Development.* In it he makes clear that although Whitehead aroused him from his dogmatic slumbers, his philosophy of nature is based on the assumption that we cannot grasp the world as a whole: it consists of "events, short, small and haphazard. . . . order, unity and continuity are human inventions." He goes on to say that "the attempt to humanize the cosmos is displeasing to me quite independently of the question whether it is true or false"; and as far back as 1899, in an essay with the significant title *Seems, Madam? Nay, It Is,* he had spoken of religion as invented, and as a device by which to prove the future excellence of the world.

This was the root of his determination to question the work of those Idealist philosophers whom, in 1914, he accused of being "less anxious to understand the world of science and daily life than to convict it of unreality in the interests of a supra-sensible world." It is not surprising, therefore, that Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein ("my pupil and later my supplanter at Cambridge") should have at first devoted themselves to the digging up of what was obscured by irrelevant detail; the revealing of the basic logical particles or atoms which compose reality; and the possibilities of constructing a hierarchy of languages possessing increasing accuracy and simplicity. This was the birth of Logical Analysis.

Yet these more technical preoccupations are in keeping with Russell's other attitudes: the world of logical particulars may be distinct from that of moral particulars, but each is structurally very similar and both relate to an underlying assumption that religion is invalid, because it makes a useless claim: that we can make sense of our world as a whole. To make such a claim is to commit what, for Russell, is a sin against the light. The description may have been repudiated, but the pejorative force remains: it is mysticism, and it was by that sin that Wittgenstein himself finally fell.

RUSSELL THE MAN, however, transcends the limits of his philosophy. Time and time again he reverts in

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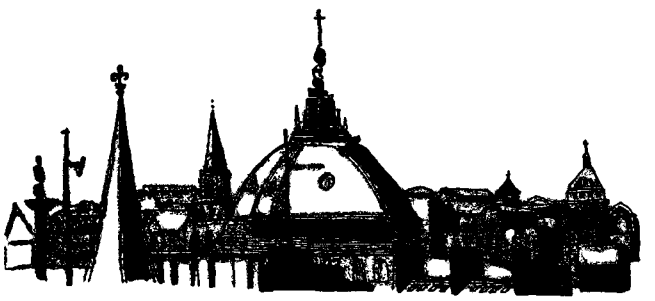
his writings to the First World War as the watershed in his life: it forced him out of a world of abstractions. "I felt," he says, "an aching compassion for the young men going off to battle . . . and found myself united to the actual world in a strange marriage of pain." He spoke out then as he speaks out now, like some modern philosopher king, unafraid to use his rank and prestige when he believes that the state is in danger.

Three years ago he backed an attack on the teaching of philosophy at Oxford by writing a preface to a book by Ernest Gellner called *Words and Things*. Russell has always dismissed the all-powerful Oxford philosophers as concerning themselves with what silly people mean when they say silly things, and in his preface he charges them with insinuating, by their methods, that the best thought is pedantic and dull, and that ideas are generally the result of carelessness and confusion. But what is worse, their cult of common usage conceals, he fears, a "curious kind of arid mysticism."

Russell has certainly not evaded his responsibilities as a philosopher: hence his preoccupation with the Bomb. He is president of the Committee of One Hundred which directs the campaign for unilateral nuclear disarmament; he has taken his seat in the Lords and among the squatters; and he has used all his powers of ruthless exposition and logical analysis to expose the evasions and confusions of his opponents. His latest book, *Has Man a Future?*, published only a few months ago, summarizes the history of the nuclear debate, ranging from the unsuccessful efforts of the American scientists to persuade their government to anticipate the consequences of dropping the first atomic bomb, to his own initiative through the Pugwash conferences to bring scientists together from both sides of the Iron Curtain, not as delegates but as human beings, shedding their official status.

To regard this as the irresponsible behavior of a nonagenarian, as did the Senate Internal Security subcommittee, or of someone who is old enough to know better, as did the Judge at the Old Bailey in February, when Russell gave evidence on behalf of the Committee of One Hundred, is to show a dangerous misunderstanding of men and motives. We must surely admire the altruism of a man who self-confessedly believes that



when he dies he will rot, and that nothing of his ego will survive.

Yet although he can thus face the great cry of Albany's: "It will come,/Humanity must perforce prey upon itself,/Like monsters of the deep," Russell's grasp of human nature lacks a dimension that is always present in Shakespeare and the tradition from which he derived; so that when, after so clearly defining our dilemma and cogently charting our risks, he tells us what to do—"a solemn declaration," "a moratorium on provocative acts"—we feel let down. Such measures would succeed only if men were habitually reasonable in the best traditions of British radicalism, and were only occasionally moved to folly; but the deliverance for which we are all seeking can come only from a deeper and richer political imagination.

RUSSELL remains, as he admitted on his eightieth birthday, an optimist, refusing to accept fatalistically that man is born for trouble; and this is precisely where he disappoints most deeply—in the vision of the Paradise, as he calls it, that man can and will achieve, if only he banishes the threat of nuclear warfare. No man's solution can rise above his analysis, and a distinct limitation is revealed by Russell's constant, even breezy, denial of that fuller understanding of human nature which dawned upon Mill when, in asking himself the question, "if all your objects in life were realized, would this be a great joy and happiness to you?," he found that an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered "No!"

And to Lear's cry in his agony—"Is there any cause in Nature that makes these hard hearts?"—Russell can only reply: "Your question is logically impermissible. It is like saying that since each son has a father, the human race must have a father; but since the concept of cause is being logically misapplied, your demand is meaningless."

Yet humanity insists on an answer; but an answer that can come only from a deeper apprehension of the human condition, such as was possessed by another Englishman who, although Mill's contemporary, elected to join an alien tradition: "Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against these giants, the passion and the pride of man."

Newman's is peculiarly a voice speaking to our own generation, whereas Russell's, that of an unrepentant liberal optimist, emerges from a tradition—temperate, rational and aristocratic—already obscured by the unforeseen consequences of its agnosticism. For us, mankind has a future only if he transplants his liberalism and his optimism to the soil in which they first were seeded.

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THE STAGE

The Wrong War

ONE OF the daily reviewers, a man who suffers bitterly from our refusal to create for him a new Golden Age of the Theater, or even a Silver one, recently rose to his full anathematizing height in order to denounce what he evidently considered to be one of the worst calamities that has ever struck our culture. The object of his wrath was a musical-comedy called "Bravo Giovanni"; against it, his breast lacerated, his sentences heaving with protest, our man threw himself in a manner that seemed to revive for a moment the great days of Shaw, Mencken and George Jean Nathan. Not in many years has Broadway been called so savagely to account.

The trouble was it was the wrong account. For "Bravo Giovanni" is a simple-minded, relatively unpretentious and almost completely inept musical which to inveigh against so strenuously is very much like excoriating an idiot child whose uncles and brothers are all members of Murder Incorporated. Where was our man when "No Strings" started to shoot up the place? And aren't those his words—"Momma, momma, momma, what a good solid show!"—on the marquee of the theater next to "Bravo Giovanni's"? a sentence which whenever I walk down this street starts in me the most painful reflections upon folksy intellectuals, the abasement of language and the collapse of standards.

In criticism — in reviewing for that matter — there should be an economy of indignation, as also of praise, which means simply that you measure out your brickbats or accolades in accordance with the relative cultural weight of the objects calling them forth. But in our super-heated, dishonest age we call "Ship of Fools" one of the greatest novels of the century and find some inoffensive little one-woman off-Broadway show the most serious threat to civilization since Attila. If the critic wishes to exercise his faculty for indignation, let it be directed against worthy targets: plays or spectacles, say, whose unjustified public acclaim, pretensions or perversion of something valuable make it desirable that a counter-position be stated.

But "Bravo Giovanni"? A piece for the ladies, a contrivance for the benefits, La Rosa Spaghetti's version of Italy, which is a lot better than Richard Rodgers' version of France. You get yourself Cesare Siepi, a tall handsome (no, not actually, his blinding smile, wavy hair and international *aura* make you think he is—he really looks rather like Bela Lugosi) Metropolitan basso, lard your book with numerous *"bella, bellas"* and *"arrivedercis,"* throw in a couple of street fiestas and some humor based on the well-known fact that Italians are irrepressible, amorous, liberty-loving, good-hearted dopes—and the only damage you do to the public is to increase the amount of boredom around. And by what transvaluation of values has boredom come to be a greater menace than lies and corruption of taste?

In point of fact, "Bravo Giovanni," tedious as it mostly was, contained at least one scene of more than routine pleasure. It took place in a Roman nightclub and centered on the extraordinary comic dancing of Maria Karnilova, a former ballerina who has turned her body into a droll artifact, an instrument of quite wonderful nonsense, marionette-like, swift and contortionist in the manner of the early Ray Bolger. We were all considerably mollified whenever she was given something to do.

As for the rest of the cast, Signor Siepi, a large Berlitz-trained, thoughtfully Continental type, was deafeningly grand-operatic, David Opatoshu and Michele Lee were soap-operatic, and the singers and dancers were merely erratic. But there wasn't an authentic cultural enemy in sight, so Mr. Reviewer-man get that machine gun pointing somewhere else. (*At the Broadhurst.*)

RICHARD GILMAN

THE SCREEN

The Road Not Taken

CANADIAN censors recently raised objections to the content of some of the films coming into their country and no doubt they had a point; but if they think their suggestion that foreign film makers set up self-regulation boards will be taken seriously, they are living in a dream world. The attitude toward sex in many foreign countries is much less puritanical than it is in North America, and the foreign movie producers, reflecting the mores of their locales, aren't too likely to be interested in reform. The Canadians, and other peoples too may reject what's sent them, but the senders won't change much, unless they are more concerned with financial returns than in artistic integrity—or, perhaps in an ideological point of view.

Producer-director Leopoldo Torre Nilsson is an Argentinian film maker of integrity; if "Summerskin," his latest picture to reach our shores and be distributed by Angel Productions, has a frankness somewhat shocking to Americans, it also has a coherence and honesty that are true to its theme. Nilsson's last film to be shown here, "End of Innocence," was about a young girl so strictly brought up that she is entirely unprepared for the shocks of life when they are thrust on her. "Summerskin," also about a young girl and also with a thoughtful script by Beatriz Guido who wrote the earlier screenplay, has an even more decadent background. Its young girl, well played by attractive Gra

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ciela Borges, has been raised in an atmosphere of easy virtue and highly-paid courtesans; so it comes as no particular surprise to her when her grandmother turns up with a remunerative proposition. Grandma's lover, whose son has only a short time to live, will finance the girl to a Dior wardrobe and a year in Paris if she will brighten the young man's last months.

This story, with its aura of sin and gaudy romance, is reminiscent of "Gigi" and shows what might have happened had not Gigi had more sense than her elders. In "Summerskin," through a series of scenes well directed by Nilsson, the girl gets over her revulsion for the sick young man (sensitively played by Alfredo Alcon), responds to his advances, and even convinces him of the sincerity of her love. By the end of the summer, he is on the way to health. But when he returns from the sanitarium in the fall, a well man and anxious to marry the girl whose love brought on his recovery, she doesn't want to marry him or anyone else. Her only interest is in the payment for her services. The bitter finale is in keeping with the sordid tale which director Nilsson has told sharply and candidly without any false sentiment to detract from its pithy theme.

LESS CLEAR in its intentions is "Joan of the Angels?" (Telepix) a Polish film with a story that is a mixture of fact and fiction about a group of seventeenth-century nuns who are supposedly possessed by demons. When a young priest arrives to help exorcise the demons, Mother Joan, perhaps sincerely or perhaps diabolically inspired, suggests he concentrate on her: "If the demons will leave me, they will leave the others." During the course of the exorcism, the intense, hard-working priest and the spirited Mother Joan are attracted to each other; and when the attraction blossoms into love, the Devil leaves Joan and enters the priest. Still determined to save Joan and keep the Devil within himself, the priest kills two innocent grooms.

There is much more to the plot than I have related, and there is a sub-plot about another nun who is having an affair with a squire. Needless to say, this unpleasant story is extremely disturbing—and it is made all the more so by the superior quality of the film making: the good performances of Lucyna Winnicka as Joan and Mieczyslaw Voit as the priest, and the fine direction of Jerzy Kawalerowicz with its effective use of the bleak countryside, church ritual and almost ballet-like compositions of the white-robed nuns in motion.

Adding to the confusion of "Joan of the Angels?" are its many ambiguities, like the references to an earlier priest who visited the convent and started the diabolic possession by tempting the nuns, or like the scene in which the new young priest, upset by all the unholy goings-on, goes for advice to a rabbi (played, for no apparent reason, by the same actor who plays the priest) and comes away no wiser. Perhaps this unsatisfactory priest-rabbi discussion is just another display of the film's attitude against religion, and it wants to be sure to include the Jewish as well as the Christian.

Since "Joan of the Angels?" (the question mark, by the way, was not used in the Polish title) started so much controversy, director Kawalerowicz made a few statements which are interesting but almost as ambiguous as the film. "The devils and the nuns constitute nothing but a pretext. What really counts is the clash in man's aspirations." "Possession and madness are nothing but revolts of human nature against old allies and conformities we are forced to put up with here." "I have tried to open up the possibilities of film narrative particularly in the rendering of certain ideas without being absolutely specific—simply by suggestion." Well, the director is specific enough in his feelings on religion. The script on which he collaborated was approved, before production started, by the Polish Government which probably knows a propaganda piece when it sees it.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

CORRESPONDENCE

"Nuclear War and Christian Responsibility"

Bryans Road, Maryland

TO THE EDITORS: President Eisenhower would not be represented by a statue in my Forum, but I do credit him with having been a Cassandra of sorts. Just before leaving office he warned the nation about the power of the giant military-industrial complex that supports our side in the arms race. The correspondent [April 20] who attacked Thomas Merton's article, "Nuclear War and Christian Responsibility" [Feb. 9], appears to be a rather disturbed member of this complex, judging from his choice of words, though he assures us that Los Alamos, where he is employed, is crowded with highly educated scientific people doing "clear, unemotional thinking" about the issue of nuclear war. Some of us prefer the thinking of the internationally famed nuclear physicist Dr. Leo Szilard, who tried to stop the use of the atom bomb on Japan and who today is organizing a peace movement.

The strongest opposition to the nuclear weapons race has come from scientists. Only the other day twenty-one hundred members of the Federation of American Scientists made an appeal against the resumption of atmospheric testing by the United States. C. P. Snow, a British scientist who is hardly a romantic scorner of nuclear energy (see his *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*), has said that a nuclear catastrophe is a statistical certainty if enough nuclear weapons are made by enough different countries. Snow has had some sharp things to say, too, about the virtual impossibility of inner-directed thought and action once one

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becomes an established part of a large bureaucracy. He cites his own experience to reinforce this thesis. The first concerted attempt to ban the bomb was made not by monks in monasteries but by scientists from laboratories who shortly after World War II formed the Association of Atomic Scientists. Perhaps the most effective peace organization in America today is SANE (National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy), a group inspired to a large extent by scientists.

But scientists have to eat, and with more and more jobs paid for out of defense money, fewer and fewer scientists have remained free of the military-industrial complex. Even in education the boy who is a whiz in science has the advantage over his non-scientific classmate, for the lion's share of scholarships and government-supported student-aid programs is designed to feed the military Moloch.

Thomas Merton in his anguish over the most monstrous depravity in history—the acceptance by a civilized country of massive weapons of genocide—is in the respectable company of such eminent men of science as Nobel Prize Winners Max Born, C. F. Powell, Herman Muller, Linus Pauling, and Hideki Yukawa; the members of the Society for Social Responsibility in Science; and the seventeen German atomic physicists who with Max Born on April 12, 1957 signed a statement that ended with the pledge: "At all events not one of the undersigned is prepared himself to share in the production, the testing, or the stock-piling of atomic weapons in any manner." ELBERT R. SISSON

BOOKS

O'Hara's Hollywood—Observed by a Neutral Camera Eye

The Big Laugh. By John O'Hara. Random House. $4.95.

by John P. Sisk

JOHN O'HARA's new novel might be regarded as an extended practical joke played by a malignant fate on a rascal who assumes the comforts of a respectability in which he is ultimately trapped. The rascal in this instance is Hubert Ward, a worthless young man who, to avoid the consequences of passing a bad check and for lack of other occupation, attaches himself to a summer stock company and then ruthlessly maneuvers himself into a small part in a Broadway play. After a minor success and a dreadful sex brawl with his director and the director's girl friend he leaves Broadway forever and heads for Hollywood.

There, despite the depression and the fact that everyone recognizes him for what he is, Hubert's fortunes, sexual and professional, continue to rise. He finds himself accepted by an elite group, sleeps with the wife of its dominant figure and shortly thereafter witnesses the latter's grief-stricken though apparently accidental death. He changes companies at the right time and with the assistance of his new studio boss ("Hubie, you and I are a couple of bastards together") becomes a major star. He marries a beautiful socialite widow and for a few years lives successfully and contentedly in a state of seeming regeneration. But the strain proves too great for both of them, the wife grows bored and Hubert is left imprisoned in his public image as a solid citizen. Ultimately we leave him-reverted to type, aged but still trailing clouds of his ancient glamour—in a marriage of convenience.

The Big Laugh has all the familiar O'Hara properties: the good conversation, the unillusioned dramatic point of view, the detailed sexual encounters, the scrupulous documentation. If there is rather less of the latter than the reader expects to find in an O'Hara novel of medium size, he is never inclined to doubt the accuracy of the author's factual grasp of his story's milieu.

I suspect that within the limits of his novel O'Hara has here reconstructed the Hollywood of the depression years as well as anyone can.

The limits of course are in relation to the kind of people about whom O'Hara writes. It is not so much that they are almost without exception a selfish, lustful, dollar-happy, mean-spirited, foul-talking lot, as that they have the effect of pulling their miserable universe around the reader until he is almost stifled by it. It is an appalling universe not simply because appalling things happen in it, but because they happen without reference to any larger issue or measure that could give them some kind of point. The Hollywood of Waugh's *The Loved One* or Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run* is no less a condemned playground but it is viewed with moral indignation; and in moral indignation there is hope because it implies the possibility of improvement. But O'Hara's Hollywood, observed by a neutral camera eye, is without hope.

In the world of such fiction, excesses of sex, violence and documentation are surrogates for moral, religious or philosophic values: ways of substituting for the imaginative grasp of enduring and sustaining realities. In such a world the possibilities of a true change for the better are remote, and O'Hara quite properly warns the reader not to expect any. This is because his story represents people in the condition of mere nature, and as C. S. Lewis has said, "To know how bad we are, in the condition of mere nature, is an excellent recipe for becoming much worse."

The character who recognizes his badness is a familiar figure in O'Hara's fiction. But much of the time his honesty is a sterile and unregenerative virtue, over-burdened and sentimentalized, as if O'Hara

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means it to cover a multitude of sins. This kind of honesty is in *The Big Laugh;* the repulsive studio boss, a veteran movie queen, Hubert himself on occasion, all have it. But it is the honesty of mere nature, and instead of covering a multitude of sins it only makes them worse.

A Passive Seeker

David Knudsen. By George P. Elliott. Random House. $4.95.

by David I. Segal

THE JANUARY 1961 issue of *Encounter* contained an article by Iris Murdoch attacking the metaphysical and moral presuppositions of modern fiction. "We picture man," she says, "as a brave, naked will surrounded by an easily comprehended empirical world. For the hard idea of truth we have substituted a facile idea of sincerity." She goes on to ask for richer, more opaque characters, living in a more complex moral reality, with which they are connected, and about which they ask the hardest possible questions, accepting no answer simply because it is consoling.

I mention this article because David Knudsen, the narrator of George Elliott's new novel, is a man inquiring into his own personality, and also into the nature of the moral universe. Knudsen is a passive seeker: the book is about the battle of moral and social ideas, with his own person the field of action. For Knudsen practical questions of behavior grow into questions of values, and he becomes so disturbed by his inability to find final answers that he retreats from life, and so of course from the questions.

Knudsen is troubled by the relationship between fathers and sons which becomes, for him, an ultimate question of freedom and responsibility. His father is a physicist committed to a belief in natural laws, apprehendable by observation and reason, who leaves his children free to find their own way through life. The son can not bear the burden of responsibility which is thus forced on him as a gift of love. He spends most of the novel trying to find some one, or some system, to bear it for him, never forgiving his father for not supplying a workable set of norms, nor life for not being rational.

He finds the ideal occupation for a man of his temperament: photography. Looking through his lens at framed, manageable pieces of reality, he finds the illusion of significance. (One of the novel's many peripheral excellences is that Knudsen describes what he is seeing the way a photographer would. The book is filled with crisp descriptions of textures, light, and arrangements of masses.)

Photography is an easy commitment: the camera may be picked up or put down at will; its only necessities are those you grant it. Tragically, Knudsen marries without understanding the difference in commitment, simply drifting. Immediately afterwards he is drafted, trained as a meteorological clerk and sent to a Pacific island. There, during a hydrogen bomb test (the time is 1953) the wind shifts unexpectedly and radioactive matter falls on the weather observers. "Science and The State happened to me."

Elliott sees The Bomb as the product of the seduction of Physics by politics, which is to say the corruption of disinterested speculation by expediency. While Knudsen recovers from radiation sickness in an army hospital he becomes obsessed by the implications of this kind of corruption, his meditations making for some of the most penetrating comments on our society I have read in a long while.

The stray wind which blows "radiant destruction" over him makes him face the essential irrationality of life, and his inability to comprehend, much less cope with it. This random attack by a weapon his father helped create fills him with a combination of guilt and horror from which he tries to flee into the Catholic Church. His hunger for faith is such that he mistakes it for the thing itself, the church representing a kind mother who will shield him from his father and the works of his father.

Knudsen returns home to find his wife pregnant. The role of father, or actor, is as impossible for him as the role of son, or acted-upon. During a retreat a friend reminds him of the possibility that his child might be deformed by his sickness, and this provides him with a rationalization for one of the two genuinely wicked acts of his life. He applies pressures to his wife, causing her not only to agree to an abortion but to seem to want one, thus freeing himself from moral responsibility for the act. There is no more talk of entering the Church: what his father (or the bomb) did to him had urged him to it; what he (or the bomb) has done to his child drives him away.

After the abortion Knudsen and his wife try to bury their guilt by turning themselves into a women's magazine couple: talking to each other only about their jobs and their home, visiting and playing cards a great deal. Here again comes the discovery that you cannot live by other people's values. While his marriage is coming apart he uses the energy derived from his own guilt to increase the guilt of his father. There are moments when the putting out of a hand would be an act of the greatest charity, but his hand can not move; and no hand moves towards him. Finally, disappointed with his life and his career, unable to sleep and unwilling to remain awake, the father kills himself. Knudsen, who had merely wanted to be left alone to take his pictures and try to achieve a usable view of the world finds that he has been an accomplice in two deaths and the destruction of a marriage. He breaks down completely and is sent to a rest home, where, in the person of a nurse who loves him he has his own last chance to love. Once more he manipulates another person forcing the nurse to break with him; the novel ends with Knudsen frightened at his ability to damage other people, living alone and taking pictures.

Knudsen's failure to find a satisfactory way of life is an example and a criticism of Miss Murdoch's article. As she herself suggests we are the unfortunate heirs of a pragmatic and utilitarian optimism which is no longer viable, but for which we have found no substitute. Until we find a new system of norms that will once more connect our consciousness to our experience our best writers are

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fated, it seems, to write about what is missing.

There are two technical weaknesses in *David Knudsen*, which will surprise readers of Elliott's short stories. Many of the crucial scenes in the book are not written, but written about, and the tone is almost unrelievedly somber. In the end Elliott's ideas and perceptions have greater force and reality than his characters. Still, this is a book that stretches the mind and heart. It asks the important questions, even though it lacks satisfying answers. Elliott does not accept the consolation of easy solutions and for this rigor we are in his debt.

A Huxley Utopia

Island. By Aldous Huxley. Harper. $5.00.

by Richard M. Ohmann

THE SEAS have been charted; *terra incognita* has dwindled grievously. The Antarctic wastes and the unknown tribes of New Guinea remain as anachronistic affronts to the white man's pride in comprehensive knowledge, but explorers and anthropologists hasten to correct the wrong.

No one expects the final mopping-up to uncover a new earthly paradise, a placid land whose inhabitants, having themselves conquered anger and unreason, hunger and climate, listen with amazed revulsion to the intruders' tales of poverty, war and neurosis in the "civilized" world. Yet although geography no longer encourages our dreams of Utopian discovery, the moral imagination still strikes out for fabulous lands, undismayed by the failure of Eldorado and Houyhnhnm-land to appear, either in the remote Indies or in quotidian England.

Now Aldous Huxley has given us Pala. His new book, *Island*, defies consideration as a novel; read as such it is crude, and only sporadically arresting. But as a Utopian tract it has its appeal. Not that Pala is any more (or less) plausible than its Utopian predecessors; the usual obstacle, human nature, stands in its way.

The appeal of Huxley's vision comes rather from its unusual complexity. Utopias, for the most part, depend heavily on one sustaining ideal—liberty, rationality, technology, central control, communism, or what have you—from which all the apparatus of social organization radiates. Pala, on the other hand, is the most extraordinary amalgam of all these conceptions.

Historically, Pala sprung out of the combined wisdom of a local nineteenth-century Raja and a canny Scotch doctor, and the legacy of these two men is an intricate mixture of East and West. Pala welcomes electric power and modern agriculture, but rejects heavy industry and militarism. It accepts Western medicine, but places strong emphasis on psychic control of the flesh and its ills. The Palanese glory in work, but avoid over-specialization. They enjoy a decentralized democracy, without the paraphernalia of mass society and thought control. They have material prosperity, but no competitive struggle for existence. They focus on immediate experience, but seek to blend it with the transcendental. And although they cultivate a mystic sense of oneness with the universe, they are skeptical of metaphysics and gods. They make sexual love an almost religious ritual, but temper that freedom with birth control and artificial insemination.

And so it goes: work and contemplation, science and mysticism, body and soul, man and god—all the dualisms resolved in the interest of the fullest, most harmonious possible life. As the old Raja put it, "Nothing short of everything will really do."

The Palanese potpourri does not result from a random eclecticism. Rather, Huxley has it, everything is really one, and the Palanese ethic of total awareness (mynah birds incessantly repeat the word "Attention" as a reminder) is supposed to lead, through the infinite diversity of experience, to its inner oneness, through the annihilation of self to complete self-fulfillment. Huxley's ecstatic synthesis of Buddhist relinquishment with Western material achievement and artistic creativity is very tempting. But I, for one, am left wondering whether *everything* is not, after all, *nothing*, where human beings are concerned—whether one must not choose between receptivity and action, peace and engagement, order and flux.

A world whose motto is "accept, accept," may indeed banish the "senseless, pointless cockfights between Man and Nature, between Nature and God, between the Flesh and the Spirit." But can such a world preserve the fruits of man's restless conceptualizing? All theories belie

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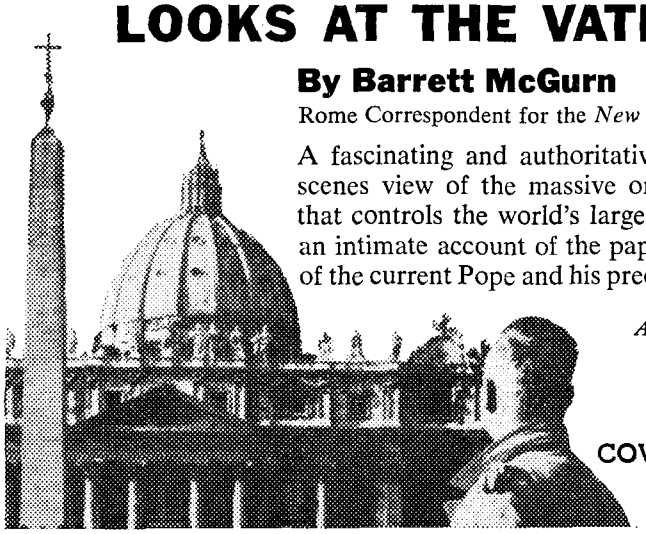

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the immediacy of experience; so do myths and art. Would there really be room in Pala for Darwin and Beethoven, for the symmetric artificiality of the wheel, the humble artifice of the law, the Promethean conquest of fire, the outrageous lie of language, the pointless cockfights of Odysseus, Augustine, and Ahab? Would there be room for *Island* itself, or any other cockfight with things as they are?

Mr. Molnar's World: The Orgman Cometh

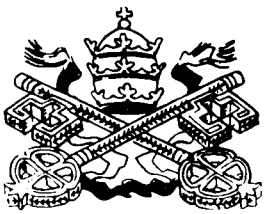
The Decline of the Intellectual. By Thomas Molnar. Meridian Books. $1.75.

by Philip Deasy

HAVING ADDRESSED himself in his last book to the future of education, Thomas Molnar has now taken up a headier question, the future of the universe. A fitting epigraph for his present work might well be a phrase of William Whyte's in *The Organization Man:* "That dehumanized collective that so haunts our thoughts." Mr. Molnar is certainly haunted. But since so many other similarly haunted men have given us the fruits of their lucubrations, Mr. Molnar's essay may haunt the reader in turn with a feeling of *déjà vu.* The vatic voice of *The Decline of the Intellectual,* however, sounds a stronger note of urgency and seriousness than its predecessors. As a true philosopher, Mr. Molnar makes sure that cheerfulness never breaks through. For he has seen the future and it works—but works, alas, only through the amazing efficiency of myriads of social engineers manipulating all the hapless citizens of the world into one shapeless superbeing of shallowness, conformity and mediocrity. The Orgman cometh. The Brave New World and 1984 are closer than we think.

As Mr. Molnar sees it, the rise of the social engineers follows hard upon the abdication of the intellectuals, another treason of the clerks. The emergence, decline and fall of the latter group form the subject of the first five chapters of Mr. Molnar's book. An erudite, lucid and adroit telescoping of intellectual history, these chapters make for exceptionally enjoyable and stimulating reading. Since Mr. Molnar sees as a chief function of the intellectual his attempt to influence and transform the economic, social and political life around him (the plan of action he adopts to achieve this transformation then hardens into an ideology), he cannot be said to emerge on the world scene until the 1300's. His greatest period of influence and power comes between the time of the *Encyclopedists* and the 1848 revolutions. Then follows a half century of crisis and confusion that leaves the intellectual at the turn of our own century with a difficult choice to make as to the future action. The possibilities are seen as three: the way of Marxism, of liberalism, or of conservatism.

Understandably, Mr. Molnar prefers not to use the labels "liberal" and "conservative," and so entitles two of his chapters "The Intellectual as a Progressive," and "The Intellectual as a Reactionary." He uses the term "neoconservative," however (and not disapprovingly), for some of his contemporaries. His own neoconservative bias shows unmistakably in the tone of his discussion of the worker priest movement in France and of Father Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man.* Similarly, he quotes two passages from *Rerum Novarum* and *On Atheistic Communism* (surely two genuinely progressive documents in the history of the Church) as counterparts of Edmund Burke's: "The Creator has mixed in His cup a number of natural evils and every endeavor which the art and policy of mankind has used from the beginning of the world to this day in order to alleviate or cure them, has only served to introduce new mischiefs or to aggravate and inflame the old." Another aspect of the bias may be noted in the way Mr. Molnar accentuates the similarities between Russia and America and minimizes the differences, as well as in the contrasting tones of his chapters on the American and European intellec-



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tual; his admiration for America and American institutions is noticeably restrained.

Mr. Molnar's suggestions for fighting the social engineering trends and the utopian mentality are tepid, indeed. Philosophy must re-discover itself and assert the true nature of man; common sense must be pitted against faith in science. But listen to Father Walter J. Ong in the current *Daedalus:* "As he looks out on the world today, man's chief problem is himself. We do not genuinely worry any longer about technological advance—perhaps we never did, for advance thrives not on worry but on enthusiasm." Mr. Molnar clearly thrives more on worry.

REVIEWERS

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ART

The Spread of Picasso's Energy

THEY SAY that a man should be judged by his best work, and I believe it. But just as there is something very important to be learned about a nation through the general run of its citizens, so there is about an artist through the general run of his work. More with Picasso than with others—for where *is the* masterpiece or even the several single masterpieces by this extraordinary artist? Not *Guernica* surely, which intrigues the mind more than the eye with its jagged outline of confusion and terror.

When one thinks of Picasso one thinks of a whole battery of paintings, the Cubist, the Classicist, the Expressionist, the abstract-looking and the traditionalist-looking—one may even think of the drawings and the sculpture rather than the painting. The roving spirit of this artist, the probing of this and then that mode in painting, leads to the spread of his energies in works of art that generate from his active brush in series, like bursts of fireworks.

In the recent exhibition in New York City of Picassos from American collectors, given in nine galleries as "An American Tribute" for the benefit of the Public Education Association, the theme of generality and dispersal is notable on several levels. The paintings (and drawings and sculpture, shown at separate galleries) were substantially from private collections, with few exceptions not the very best Picassos but with few exceptions not the worst either. They were, on the whole, the "general run" of the artist's work. Shown in separate series at separate galleries, this split-up exhibition was given for the benefit of American children's public education, in commercial galleries, drawn largely from private collections of wealthy Americans, devoted to the work of a Spanish artist who lives in bohemian luxury in the most comfortable bourgeois country in the world (France) and who has, at the age of eighty, just been awarded the Lenin Peace Prize.

The first thing to be said about the general run of Picasso's work is that its level is extraordinarily high, particularly in certain periods such as 1920-25, when with one hand he was re-incarnating a classical world and with the other brilliantly evolving a brand-new style of synthetic Cubism. Picasso has said that there are no bad Picassos, only less good ones; in this period one could almost agree with him. His roving spirit is such that he is continually exploring new modes of expression and intermittently drawing inspiration from sources in the past—from African masks to Velasquez, from Greek vases to Cézanne. In those halcyon years in the 20's he sustained separate intensive programs in opposite directions, performing as an innovator and a catalyst with about

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equal success. In this he is the very opposite of his great contemporary, Matisse, whose equally long life was devoted to an exploration and perfection in depth of his style. Their paths sometimes crossed, like a meteor shooting across the path of a fixed star.

Above all, the characteristic quality in all Picasso's work is vitality: his work jumps with life. It is this, coupled with his draughtsmanship—"in the opinion of many, the most gifted draughtsman in the history of art," John Richardson remarks—that directs the trajectory of his creativity. This vitality and genius for draughtsmanship are disciplined by a passionate absorption in plastic expression—despite his exuberance and his native facility Picasso is a very cerebral artist in the specific sense that aesthetic ideas are the dominant factor in all his work. Two of his most famous paintings—the *Guernica* and *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon*—are outstanding only because of the fascinating aesthetic conceptions they embody.

The satisfactory thing is that in the mass of Picasso's work—the general run, as displayed in that multiple exhibit—aesthetic ideas "dig in" with the vigorous and sometimes violent exercise of his facile and eloquent talent so that they control without overwhelming his expression. When this coincides with what Picasso might call "a good day," better things than the *Guernica* result. The painting in the exhibit called *Still Life With Playing Cards, Glasses and Bottle of Rum* ("Vive la. .") of 1915 is a synthetic Cubist painting which is no longer didactic: the aesthetic idea has been so absorbed that the painting is not just interesting, it is eloquent. This is again true, and even more so, in the Guggenheim Museum's *Mandolin and Guitar* (1924), in which the radiance of the Mediterranean is prismatically constructed.

Many of Picasso's paintings look like drawings, and it has been the opinion of some that he is only a great draughtsman and not truly a painter. The point is that he is a great artist, which is the crowning glory. Nevertheless, there is a grain of truth in the charge, in that drawing is his incomparable tool and that he uses color knowingly and with the greatest éclat, but as an adjunct to line. He executes the most painterly drawings, but his paintings are not primarily painterly. When you see a panorama of his average work this fact is more striking than when you are presented a single achievement. His sculpture is often very painterly sculpture—*Man With a Lamb* from the Philadelphia Museum and *Head of a Woman* from the Hirshlorn Collection were admirable examples in "American Tribute"—but this is only one of the artist's baffling contradictions.

Picasso is a most difficult artist to be brief about; his work rockets all over the lot. In many vivid remarks about his art the artist himself has never dropped a clue to a summing-up. A single anecdote may illustrate all the rest: at an exhibit in Paris he was approached by a breathless lady who begged assistance in understanding his latest paintings. Picasso put his finger to his lips and said: "Sh-h-t! You must not speak to the pilot!" BETTY KAUFMAN

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